REMARKS

This is responsive to the Office Action mailed November 15, 2006. Accordingly, it is accompanied by a request to extend the time for response by 3 months, together with the required fee.

Section 102 Rejections

Claims 33 and 34 stand rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by the England Patent Specification, No. 1,466,643 ("England Specification"). The Examiner has identified a first connector 20, a second connector 40, and a drive 66 for driving the connectors between engaged and disengaged positions. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

The England Specification

The England Specification describes an "electrical connector . . . composed of two halves or components [12 and 14]." Page 3, lines 66 - 68. The connector 12 includes a shell 16 provided with a mounting flange 18 having holes 20 therein. Page 3, lines 68 - 71. It is assumed, therefore, that the Examiner intended the connector 12, and not the holes 20, to be identified as the claimed first connector.

The connector component 14 includes a shell 34 which has a rubber grommet 40. Page 3, lines 90 - 95. It is assumed, therefore, that the Examiner intended the connector 14, and not the grommet 40, to be identified as the claimed second connector.

The drive 66 is described as a "coupling nut" having internal threads 68 that engage external threads 32 on the shell 16 (of the connector component 12). Page 3, lines 127 - 130.

This is shown in Figure 1. The coupling nut includes a flange 70 "intended to bear in a sliding fashion" against another flange 58 "so as to pull the shell 34 to the left in Figure 1 when the coupling nut is advanced helically to the left." Page 4, lines 4 - 10. There is also a "drive ring 90" that is "Initially, . . . loosely fitted over the coupling nut 66" (Page 4, lines 53 - 56); however, a swaged lip 92 and flange 96 of the drive ring prevent the drive ring from moving axially with respect to the coupling nut 66 (Page 5, lines 69 - 74). The drive ring supports angularly spaced shoes 98 which move with the drive ring when it is rotated. Page 4, lines 72 - 79.

Assuming that the component 14 is to be mated or coupled with the component 12, an operator merely aligns the two parts, moves the component 14 forward "and then starts to twist te drive ring 90 . . . ." Page 5, lines 65 - 77. The several shoes 98 move in unison, and contact shoulders 86 of the coupling nut 66. "This provides a metal-to-metal contact between the drive ring 90 and the coupling nut 66 . . . ." Page 5, lines 78 - 86.

The England Specification goes on to describe how, once the coupling nut is fully tightened, the connection should not become uncoupled due to the provision of "wedge blocks 110" that tighten as a result of vibration. However, deliberate uncoupling is permitted by the shoes 98, which "kick" wedge blocks 110 in the opposite direction, to dislodge them.

Pertinence of the England Specification To the Present Claims

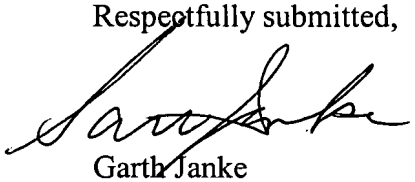
It appears that the drive ring 90 is turned by hand, and turns in essentially lock-step with the coupling nut 66, the (helical) internal threads 68 of which mate with (helical) external threads 32 of the connector 12. For relevant purposes, the external threads 32 of the connector 12 are analogous to the threads of an ordinary screw, and the coupling nut 66 is analogous to an

ordinary nut for use with the ordinary screw, and what is disclosed in the England Specification is essentially a screw/nut combination.

A screw/nut combination translates rotational motion into linear motion and vice versa. It is respectfully submitted that, by contrast, a "gearing arrangement" as required by the claims takes a given motion as an input and outputs a motion of the same qualitative type. For example, rotational motion of a drive gear 38 causes a rotational motion of a driven gear 36. By the present invention, a gearing arrangement is added to what is disclosed in the England Specification.

In support of this distinction, the Examiner is respectfully requested to take notice that, in a screw/nut combination, neither the screw or nut is typically referred to by persons of ordinary skill as being a "gear," or the combination referred to as a "gearing arrangement." Hence, it is respectfully submitted that the term "gearing arrangement" in the rejected claims cannot reasonably be read to encompass the screw/nut combination in the England Specification.

Respectfully submitted,



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